- Enhanced subsidy of 25% in participation fee is being offered by the Ministry of Tourism and the Indiatourism offices overseas in the Indian Pavilions set up at the major International Travel Fairs and Exhibitions till the end of the financial year 2009-10.
- All States have been requested to beef up security measures in hotels and at tourist sites in their respective States.
- Familiarisation Tours for trade and media representatives to Mumbai and other regions of the country have been specially organized to project the ground realities relating to safety/security conditions in the country.
- Permission has been given to corporates in the hotel sector to avail of External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) upto US$ 100 million per year for foreign currency and/or rupee capital expenditure for permissible end users.

In addition to the above specific measures initiated recently, the other steps taken by the Government to promote tourism in the country include:—

- Development of tourism infrastructure at tourist sites with the cooperation of other Ministries/Departments and State/UT Governments;
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure, particularly that for budget hotels;
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions;
- Direct approach to the consumers through electronic and print media through the "Incredible India" Campaign; and
- According greater focus to the emerging markets, particularly of China, North East Asia and South East Asia.

Target of tourist arrival

95. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any proposal to waive off visa fee, reduction in entrance charges to monuments and temporary tax holiday till Commonwealth Games in 2010 to soften the blow for the tourism industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Foreign Tourist Arrival (FTA) has come down significantly due to economic slowdown;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to achieve the target of 10 million tourists by 2010?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) With a view to encourage development of hotel accommodation for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games 2010, a five year Tax Holiday under Section 80-ID (1) of the Income Tax Act was announced in the budget of

2007-08 for new hotels of two, three and four star category and Convention Centres coming up between 1.4.2007 to 31.3.2010 in the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Districts of Faridabad, Gurgaon, Gautam Budh Nagar and Ghaziabad.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Foreign Tourist Arrival (FTA) for the period January to May, 2009 has shown a decline of 10.6% compared to arrivals for the same period during 2008. However, in the month of May, 2009, it was only 1.9% less than May, 2008.

(e) Ministry of Tourism, through its Indiatourism offices overseas is undertaking a series of promotional activities with the objective of increasing foreign tourist arrivals. These activities include, advertising, participation in travel fairs, exhibitions, road shows, India evenings, seminars and workshops, Indian food and cultural festivals; publication of brochures, inviting media personalities, tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the Hospitality Programme of the Ministry.

In addition, a "Visit India 2009" Scheme has been announced by the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with all stakeholders including airlines, hotels, tour operators, State Governments for incentivising travel to India during the current year.

The Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism has been expanded so as to provide financial assistance to service providers for the promotion of Medical, Convention and Conference and Domestic Tourism in the country.

Foreign tourists

96. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that tourism industry suffered a setback due to the reducing number of foreign tourists to our country;

(b) whether the reasons for this have been analysed by Government; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to increase the number of foreign tourists to our country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI SULTAN AHMED): (a) and (b) The estimated number of foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India during January-May, 2009 is 2.13 million, registering a decline of 10.6 % over the corresponding figure of 2.38 million in January-May, 2008. The decline in FTAs in recent months may be due to various reasons including global financial meltdown and terrorist activities.

(c) To increase the number of foreign tourists to our country, the Government has taken the following steps:—

- A **"Visit India 2009"** Scheme has been announced, in collaboration with all stakeholders including airlines, hotels, tour operators, State Governments for incentivising travel to India.
- Financial support being provided to approved service providers for undertaking promotional activities overseas under the Market Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme has been enhanced.